



An inside view
before the destruction.



Pearlington Library prior to
Hurricane Katrina



Pearlington Library after the Hurricane.

Maryland Library Association Adopts Mississippi Library

Months have passed since Hurricane Katrina vented her wrath on the Gulf Coast region, but new photos of destroyed homes and mold-choked buildings, as well as stories of personal loss and hardship underscore the need for continued relief efforts.

While the most basic necessities for the Hurricane victims have finally been addressed, the need for other forms of assistance is still great. One of the services that has been greatly compromised or wiped out in the region is access to the public libraries. In Mississippi alone, more than 40 libraries suffered some degree of damage; many were, in fact, completely destroyed. Along with the books, reference materials and other amenities, these libraries offered free Internet access for the public — a now must-have resource to file claims with FEMA and access other important information regarding insurance and other matters.

Libraries in Maryland are stepping in to help. The Maryland Library Association (MLA) Board have voted to adopt a “sister” library in the community of Pearlington, Miss. Marion Francis, Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) Administrator and a Mississippi native, is chairing the committee that is in charge of this effort. The group also includes representatives from other public, academic and special libraries in the state, as well as media specialists from some of the public school systems.

As part of the MLA effort, the Allegany County Public Library has offered to donate its soon-to-be-retired bookmobile to the Pearlington Library. In anticipation of bestowing this gift, MLA is soliciting cash and other donations from library systems, corporations and the general public to refurbish the vehicle and outfit it with computers, books and other materials that can be enjoyed by the residents of Pearlington and the surrounding communities.

Says Sharman Bridges Smith of the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC), “This outpouring of support is a bright spot in an otherwise overwhelming, heartbreaking and long-term recovery.”



**Anyone interested in contributing to this effort
can send financial donations to:**
Margaret Carty
Executive Director
Maryland Library Association
1401 Hollins Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21223



Please make the check out to “MLA” and note “disaster relief” in the memo area on the check.

The target date for the delivery of the bus and materials is the week before Christmas. Further information about the assistance being offered by MLA will be made available on this Web Site as details become available.